

2015 AHA Convention Report

Wednesday, November 18th.

At the board of directors meeting, Cynthia Richardson, AHA president, informed the group that protests have been filed with USEF charging two trainers and four owners with abuse stemming from videos taken at U S Nationals of halter classes. She was quick to point out that this was not a witch hunt. The persons filing the protests had conversation with both Stan Morey and USEF. In their eyes, these were legitimate instances of abuse. There was conversation about removing halter from US Nationals and holding those classes on an east/west rotation. Sites being looked at are Scottsdale and the Tennessee area. The halter folks feel they bring a lot of money and international recognition to the table and the spotlighted for that.

The national shows are on good financial footing while memberships and revenues continue to decline. While many may bemoan the horse shows, currently, it is what is keeping AHA and many of the clubs afloat.

AHA spend considerable monies in the past year on building renovations. New HVAC, lighting, and roof were all installed. It wasn't intended to this much in one year, but when they went to replace the HVAC, they realized the roof would not support it. When the HVAC was installed, they realized the wiring and control systems would not support it. Things kind of snowballed, but all is good now.

The website rebuild has been brought in house. January 11th, the non-member areas of the website will roll out. Hand in hand with the website is "Future States." Future States, headed up by Cynthia's husband, is the modernization of the decades old computer systems. The goal is to automate as many paper processes as possible and allow those items to be done via the website. The analogy Cynthia used was the AHA computer system is like a Volkswagen. Every time the staff needed the system to perform a new function it was added on to much like a piece of luggage is strapped to the Volkswagen. The AHA Volkswagen is so overloaded with luggage, its wheels are flat.

Leslie Lockard spoke briefly about competitions. The AHA One Days Shows are growing. This is one reason for the resolution to collect the 9-90 fee from every competition.

Russ Taylor informed the group of the addition six new Breeder Sweepstakes classes at US Nationals. These are AOTR jackpot classes with Sweepstakes monies added to the pot. The classes are country English, hunter, and western pleasures for both purebred and half-Arabians. 2016 will be the first year for the \$15,000 Young Horse Dressage class for four & five year old horses. There was talk that there may be an additional Sweepstakes class at Sport Horse Nationals.

Debbie Fuentes, the registrar, said income being generated by Registry Services in mostly coming from transported semen certificates as registrations continue to decline and at present registrations are behind 2014 numbers. Horses are starting to be imported into China and as of yet, China does not maintain a studbook. Registry services is helping with those records. More tutorial videos on "how to" are in the works for the website. 2015 random DNA testing of half-Arabians at US Nationals was increased. They tested newly registered as well as known registered horses to confirm identity. All passed.

Julian McPeak, the marketing director, was glad to say the marketing department was fully staffed. She also was very positive about the Arabians at Central Park Horse Show. What tremendous exposure. Many throughout the world do not ride their Arabians and were very surprised to see them ridden. A comment from a hunter/jumper person was surprised to see that the ladies in the country English pleasure class actually looked like they were having fun. She reiterated that to receive any communications from AHA you must be opted in. It's either all or nothing. AHA is looking to do more community outreach in Denver. Modern Arabian Horse magazine recently won four awards including best cover.

In the Sport Horse committee, discussion revolved around the resolution creating sport horse showmanship. That resolution was tweaked.

The Plenary Session was fairly uneventful while proponents discussed the merits of their resolutions. Many of the resolutions were fixes to existing problems especially dealing with rules for showmanship, western horsemanship, and working hunter.

Thursday, November 19th.

The Convention's first general session began with our president, Cynthia Richardson's, state of the association address. While at Convention, a new HVAC system was being installed as well as new lighting throughout the building. The HVAC was shot. For a few dollars more, the new lighting system will hopefully mean a reduction in monthly utility costs and AHA was able to take advantage of IRS tax credits. Cynthia was extremely upbeat about the Central Park Horse Show. The AQHA was also asked to attend. While it is not meant to be a horse show, it did provide a place for the world to see our horses. Look for it again in 2016. She also stressed the need for good business people in the organization and not just horse people. The investment committee has moved money out of government bonds into mutual funds in the hope a better return can be gained.

The second Sport Horse Committee focused on the further tweaking the sport horse showmanship resolution. Madam President pointed out a glaring error during the plenary session which resulted in a fairly extensive rewrite. Several meeting attendees were thrilled to have the sport horse under saddle walk/trot 10 & under class being added. Cathy Gage, the sport horse national committee chair, was present to hear the concerns and feedback from those present about the errors and other issues at this year's show. Discussion about the scoring of the in hand classes was rather lengthy.

Western dressage has been added to the dressage committee. Since there were no dressage resolutions to discuss, a list of discussion items regarding western dressage was provided. Some of the items were, the use of whips, limiting the number of rides, and equipment changes. As this is still relatively new to most of the country, many thought too many changes this early weren't necessary. The discipline needs to evolve more first.

Friday, November 20th.

The membership committee mostly discussed the resolution addressing delegate count. The opponents didn't see a need to increase the count as much as to understand why clubs aren't sending their current delegation. Also mentioned was 20% of our youth members do not have a club affiliation. 1/3 of the clubs do not have a youth membership available. One club actually pays for the membership and bills the individual.

Other than the addition of the six new Sweeps classes at US Nationals, the Sweepstakes commission didn't have anything new to report. What was discussed, and rather heatedly, was the new requirement that only nominated foals can show in regional and national yearling classes. This was brought up by both sport horse and main ring exhibitors. Some thought that a grace period should be enacted. The commission felt that once the foal hits the ground it's too late. The concern was only the cherry picked foals would get nominated if weanling nominations were allowed. The other topic was the inequity of prize money being offered at US Nationals vs Sport Horse Nationals. Why weren't the payouts the same? The answer is far more horses entered at US are nominated than at Sport Horse. So, the conversation becomes a chicken vs the egg. The commission wants people to nominate foals to increase payouts. Breeders don't want to nominate foals until the payouts are there.

Resolution voting began during General Session II. My favorite part of convention. A couple of the more discussed were the 5-15, leased horses being shown in owner classes, and 6-15, two unrelated owners showing in owner classes. Almost across the board, trainers wanted the passage of these two and true amateur owners did not. The proponents for both said other breeds do this and we need to follow suit. What wasn't said was the other breeds do not have amateur to ride classes. For those that don't own the horse, there is a slew of classes already available. They countered with the pride of ownership, then just buy the horse.

Saturday, November 21st

The keynote speaker of the third general session, Phillip Anderson, spoke about two main areas. Common sense is not common to all. Things that, we, as experienced horse people, deem common sense are often times not common to the uninformed. This is where we find ourselves in trouble. His other discussion point is, at present, any organization can be made up of five generations: the mature/silent generation, the baby boomers, the gen Xers, millennials, and gen Z. Each of these generations has different viewpoints and what is important to them. Mr. Anderson said the Baby Boomers are strong believers in hierarchy and one needs to work their way to the top. Whereas the another generation may say "I'm here to help now." Organizations must adapt to meeting the needs of all members. He was an excellent speaker.

Respectfully,

Cricket Gates

2015 AHA Convention Report

Irvette Timms, President, PAHA

Wednesday, November 18th

The AHA Board of Directors Meeting numerous reports were presented by the various committees and departments. Registration, memberships and sponsorships were down, but this is an industry wide trend, not unique to AHA. Of significance was the report regarding a new website roll out will take place starting in January. The new sections will be for “guests” as opposed to members. The goal is to make the website totally interactive so that all business can be done online. A five year plan for revamping many parts of AHA and how it operates were touched on. If the changes can be realized, it should bring new people in.

There was a lot of information presented during the rest of the BOD meeting covering everything from shows to Youth to racing.

Attended the Youth and Amateur Committee meetings. Discussion about allowing nonowners to show as owners was begun. This would be one of the more contentious topics.

Thursday, November 19th

GENERAL SESSION

The location of the Convention was to originally have been Denver but due to a hotel remodel, it was changed to Tulsa.

Cynthia Richardson presented the State of the Association. This year’s theme was Collaboration.

Her main points were:

AHA Future State: This is to be a more automated/computerized way of doing business. Guest pages will go live on the website in early January. All AHA systems are being rewritten and converted to work together which is not currently the case.

New Nomination Process: Would like to attract more business people to help run the organization.

Central Park Show: What a great way to promote our horses in a new way. Going forward in 2016.

Upgrades to HQ: Improvements have resulted in a 22%/month savings due to better efficiency. This is our biggest asset and must be maintained.

Investment Policy Group: A new investment strategy was put into place in conjunction with Merrill Lynch Mgmt.

We need to work on motivation and looking at Return on Investment. We have the best product (our horses) so we need to let people know that.

Club Charters:

The sad business of revocation of charters took place. Six clubs were revoked with a seventh hoping to stay alive.

Treasurer's Report from Bob Nash:

Mr. Nash reported that we were running in the positive with regard to actual vs budget. Challenges are in Memberships, Sweepstakes and Registrations.

Results of the various Committee Elections were announced.

AHA FUTURE STATE

The strategic plan was put into place in 2013. AHA is moving toward using business tech to maximize productivity and efficiency and manage change. The goals are to give better customer service, make the staff more efficient, keep the organization relevant and meet the needs of the members.

AHA is an info based business. They want to allow members to do business as "self service" with transactions executed in "real time", automate as much as possible to eliminate paper transactions. This will give the foundation to build the future.

New and appropriate financial software and new hardware are needed and budgeting must account for tech replacements. Creation of a store front for customer service and activities that can be maintained on a set of programs and equipment is key.

EQUINE STRESS/RESEARCH AND EDUCATION COMMITTEE

A protest was lodged at Nationals that has gone to USEF regarding halter "prep". Do we need to re-examine how we show our horses (hard stand up)? People are sometimes scared to report what they see for fear of retaliation. There is a charge to file so it is hoped that those who file are sincere. This money is returned if the charges are deemed to be valid. The issue of "bagging" was also touched on and there are steps to control how it is done and where.

The Hoof Study Group talked about the correct place to measure for hoof length. Shoeing methods currently used are enhancing and affecting natural movement, not necessarily providing any therapeutic benefits. Pictures of acceptable shoes are needed to know what is legal and illegal.

DRESSAGE

I attended the end of the Dressage session. Two resolutions were discussed and recommended for modification. Sport Horse Nationals has added judges for 2nd and 3rd level and established a third ring to prevent the day from running 12 hours. There will be Western Dressage exhibition classes.

HUNTER JUMPER COMMITTEE

The resolutions discussed were 13-15. Motions were made to approve. Loren Robertson was the chair.

REGIONAL CAUCAS MEETING

The Region 15 Caucas meeting was held off site. For minutes of that meeting, contact a member of the Regional Board.

Friday, November 20th

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

Club Bios were discussed. It was stressed that bios needed to be brought up to date as that is a potential member's intro to the club.

Discussions discussed ways to maintain and retain membership levels. Youth members – we need to attract more kids. At least ½ of the youth members of AHA do not belong to a club. It is less expensive for adult member to get a competition card by being a club member but this does not apply to Youth. Would waiving youth membership fees help to get kids to join your club?

It is also a reality that if you only show once, it is actually less expensive to pay the one day member fee. This might need to be addressed or the value of membership for other things needs to be conveyed.

Social media presence takes place at shows rather than afterward. Use social media to create a buzz about your shows and give members things to talk about.

There was a decline in membership again. 141 of our clubs have less than 50 members. A grant was given by USEF to do promotional activities/materials. There was a discussion about dropping the number of members required per delegate took place. It is hoped that by decreasing the number of members needed from 50 to 35 we will be able to recruit new attendees for convention.

AMATEUR COMMITTEE

The second committee session centered on resolutions dealing with multiple individuals owning a horse and being able to show as "owner" which is not currently allowed. The other topic was the joint ownership of a horse with a rescue and allowing that horse to be shown "owner" because there are multiple parties. History showed that only one horse would have been affected by this change in the previous show year.

BREEDERS SWEEPSTAKES

Six amateur performance classes are being added: 3 PB and 3 Half Arab.

The Buy In program would be for owners- the first question should be: Is it sweepstakes? At time of purchase.

The Jackpot program at Nationals – there would be no qualifications for the class. Horses must be sweepstakes of a certain age. AOTR classes would be all age horses and riders – Cost \$500/horse + \$15K added to the pot by AHA.

GENERAL SESSION 2

There were 398 eligible delegates for convention, 268 registered and 260 were credentialed.

Report by USEF's Chris Welton showed that they had a shortfall of \$1.7 million. They have been working toward getting their financial ship in order and are using less surplus each year. They are looking at revamping their fee structure and how they service their members. They have had a turnaround on cost and used a 3rd party to work on their network.

Glenn Petty, AHA EVP, talked about the website and gave a report on staff numbers. He stressed that we have not had a recovery from the huge drop during '08-09 and even though the economy has recovered somewhat, the industry has not.

The Horseman's Distress Fund was able to raise a total of \$22,700 from convention donations.

Saturday, November 21st

GENERAL SESSION 3

Phillip Anderson of ReThink Consulting gave the key address. He said to remember that everything we do was "new" once upon a time. The place to start with differentiation is your "WHY". People don't buy What you do, they buy Why you do it. We need to make sure we stay relevant.

Consider Leadership and Followership - to be a good leader, you have to be a good follower. Serve your members from the bottom.

We currently have 5 generations actively engaged. We have the pre-1946ers, the 1946-1964 group, the 1965-1989ers, the 1990 – 2010s and then the 2010 to present. We need to listen to the younger generations especially the tech savvy groups and ask them to participate and serve. They will not wait around until it's "time" for them to be elevated to leadership.

We need to consider the reason we do what we do – our WHY. It is not who we are TO each other, it is who we are FOR each other. This is our shared purpose and what keeps our community together. We are competing for leisure time and resources. AHA must be "mobile friendly".

Sydney Young was announced as AHYA's Youth of the Year. She is from Region 17.

Cheryl Hanson gave a report on the Convention Committee. We are back in Denver for 2016 and they are considering an offsite trip as one of the convention events. They are also looking to streamline the meeting schedule into a track format to allow easier attendance of multiple committees dealing with a resolution.

Nancy Harvey updated us about the Arabian Horse Foundation. They awarded \$29,000 of scholarship support in 2015 and research grants of over \$11,000.

Julian McPeak, head of marketing, talked about the social media hashtag #TheBlueRoom as a way to communicate excitement over the shows. Arabian horses at Central Park were put up on YouTube videos. The website development is top priority. She talked up the updates to the guest section. One of the things

you can do is click on the “get local” choice and see clubs in the area with their bios. Members can also submit activities and events to be added. These will be vetted before they go live on the site

Stan Morey reported on the numbers of qualified judges and stewards. He also talked about the complaint that was file with USEF and a video that was put on the internet regarding practices for halter. We all need to be aware of animal welfare groups and try to be proactive and look at how and why we do things to see if we might need to change practices or do more in the way of education.

The remainder of the resolutions were voted upon.

Respectfully,

Irvette Timms

CONVENTION REPORT 2015 submitted Marty Kleiner

General Information:

1. Currently AHA has 44 full time employees, 2 part time employees and one seasonal employee.
2. Over \$400,000 was spent in 2015 to update and fix the HVAC, lighting and roof. All within projection and allowed for rebates to decrease expenses.
3. There are 234 clubs and 99 did not send any delegates.
4. Canadian Nationals and Youth Nationals were under budget (numbers down). Canada hurt by number of states under VS quarantine.
5. Registrations down for both Purebred and Half-Arabian/Anglo-Arabian Registries.
6. Overall AHA membership down
7. Judges: 115 R/r and 154 R/N currently on the list with 134 Stewards.
8. Delegate attendance 260 attended while there were 398 eligible (349 club delegates).
9. Resolution results, President and Executive President speeches may be found on the AHA web site

Committee Meetings:

Arabian Professional & Amateur Committee:

Meeting was very brief and only dealt with the Amateur High Point program and the costs to enter or for a show to sponsor. All shows will now count. Forms and rules are available on line at their site Arabian Professional & Amateur Association.

Discussed the Hall of Fame Awards and the addition of the Trainer of the Year for a member of the Hall of Fame.

Budget & Finance Committee:

Reviewed resolutions 3-15 (Approved by Committee/Passed by Convention), 5-15 (Disapproved/Withdrawn) 7-15(Disapproved/Defeated), 32-15(Approved/Passed), and 34-15 (Disapproved/Withdrawn).

Went into closed session non-committee members asked to leave.

Arabian Breeders Sweepstakes:

Numbers starting to come up in nominations with over 4400 for 2015. Looking at older horse classes.

Changes and additions to Sweepstake for 2016 and beyond:

Breeder nominator payout to increase from 5% to 10%

Yearling Classes at U.S., Canada, and Sport Horse Nationals restricted to Breeding Entries only.

Young Horse Dressage payback at Sport Horse Nationals \$15,000.00 for Breeding Entries in the Top Ten. Non-Sweepstakes horses may compete up until the year 2021 when all horses must be enrolled as Breeding entries.

AAOTR Sweepstakes Jackpot classes added six classes for U.S. Nationals Arabian and Half-Arabians. Western Pleasure, Hunter Pleasure and Country English Pleasure. Restricted to Breeding entries only with payouts 20% for Champion, 10% for Reserve Champion and 8.75% for the balance of the Top Ten.

Payback for Champion AWP horse at U.S. Nationals \$5,000 for Arabian & \$3,500 for Half-Arabian if they are enrolled as a Breeding Entry.

National Events Operational Procedures Committee:

This committee, made up of the commissioners of the national championship shows and national championship trail competitions, establishes and sets the general rules for all national shows. They approve trophies and awards, set pay scales for officials. Discussions in the meeting included volunteers, approval for purchases at several shows and the changing/addition of judges and panels.

U.S. National will now have separate judging panels for Trail/Showmanship and for Working Western/Cutting.

Membership:

Reviewed the following resolutions: 3-15 (Disapproved/Passed), 5-15 (Disapproved/Withdrawn), 7-15 (Disapproved/Disapproved).

Major discussion centered on the reduction of members needed per delegate from 50 to 35. Reason being to get more members involved and increase the delegate count for negotiations with hotels. The resolution to change and increase the delegate/member count passed so that as of December 31, 2016 a club will be eligible to have 1 delegate per 35 members plus one IF the member count is over the multiple of 35. Examples 35 members or less one delegate; 70, two delegates; 105 three delegates; 140, four delegates; 175, five delegates; 210, six delegates; fraction of additional 35 members add one delegate.

IF Pennsylvania would have 211 AHA Adult members the delegate count would change by one additional delegate

Some basic numbers: the eligible club delegate count has shrunken over the past five years from 428 to 349; the actual club delegate attendance has gone from 257 to 218. Total membership (adult) has gone from 24,178 to 18,654 while club membership has gone from 13,847 to 10,906 in the same time period. In simple terms total membership has dropped 22.9% while club membership has dropped 21%. This all appears to be in line with the other equine organizations but are quite shocking

Arabian Breeders Sweepstakes New for 2016

- ❖ Breeder/Nominator payback increases to 10%
- ❖ Yearling classes at U.S. Nationals, Sport Horse Nationals and Canadian Nationals are restricted to Breeding Entries only
- ❖ Payback for the Champion AWP horse at U.S. Nationals (\$5,000 for Arabian and \$3,500 for Half-Arabian/Anglo-Arabians) if they are enrolled as a Breeding Entry
- ❖ Young Horse Dressage payback at Sport Horse Nationals in the amount of \$15,000 for Breeding Entries placing in the Top Ten. Non-Sweepstakes horses may compete up until the year 2021 when all horses must be enrolled as Breeding Entries
- ❖ AAOTR Sweepstakes Jackpot classes added for U.S. Nationals. Arabian and Half-Arabian/Anglo-Arabians can compete in Western Pleasure, Country English Pleasure and Hunter Pleasure. Sweepstakes will add \$15,000 to the jackpot for each class. These classes are restricted to Breeding Entries only. Champion will receive 20%, Reserve Champion 10% and 8.75% to each of the remaining Top Ten.

See Green in 2016!



ARABIAN
BREEDERS SWEEPSTAKES

Your Life's work-rewarded for a lifetime